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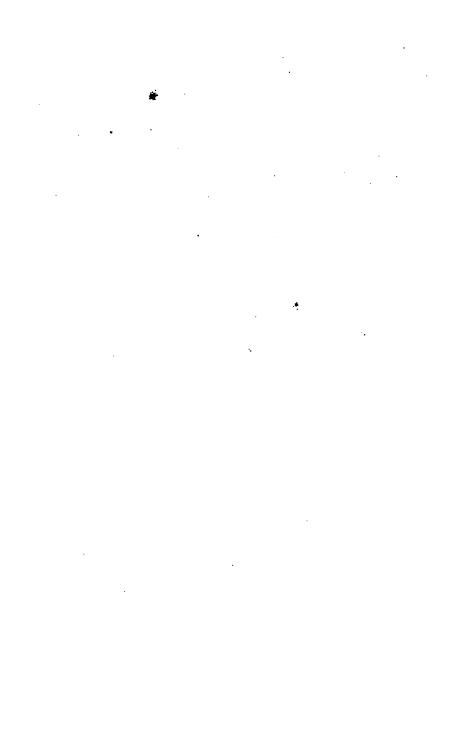
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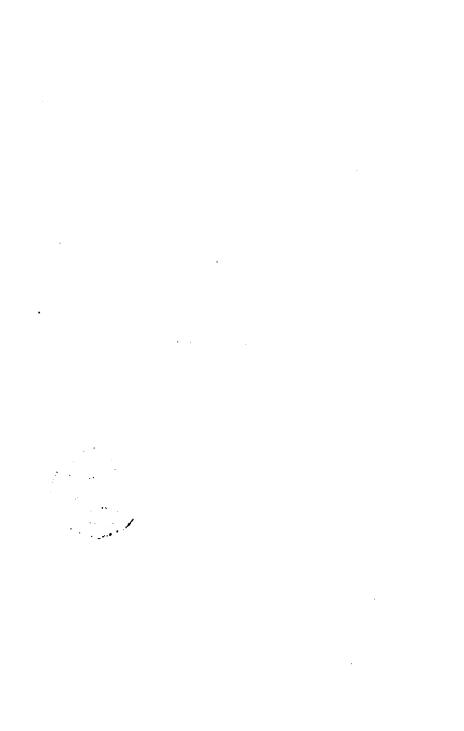




NOTES



MUSICAL NOTES.



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- I. THE GREAT COMPOSERS.
- II. VIOLINISTS AND THE VIOLIN.
- III. THE VIOLIN AND ITS HISTORY.

WILLETT ADYE, ESQ.





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JOHN LODGE ELLERTON, ESQ.,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS INSCRIBED

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE Three Musical Essays contained in this volume originally appeared in certain local journals.

The first, on The Great Composers, was put together as a Lecture, and read in the Assembly Rooms at Weymouth.

The second is a humble attempt to point out the leading characteristics of the greatest violinists of this age, commencing with Viotti, the actual founder of the modern school of violin-playing.

The third was penned as a Review of a popular work on the History of the Violin.

It is hoped these imperfect and sketchy notes, now reproduced in a more permanent form, may find favour with intelligent musicians. The author of these pages has endeavoured to render all professional and technical details with due accuracy by laying under contribution such works as he could obtain for the purpose. Among these may be mentioned the Life of Beethoven, edited by Moscheles, the treatise of Bombet on Haydn and Mozart, and Spohr's autobiography; while, in the somewhat extended notice of Paganini's career, the memoir by Fetis has been chiefly relied on.

Some singular and interesting statements have lately appeared in a leading musical journal, affecting the authorship of compositions hitherto attributed to Mozart, especially his last work, the Requiem. It is probable from the circumstances of the case, that the score was not quite finished at the composer's death, some of the subjects only sketched; and portions of the orchestration in the score merely indicated, rather than filled up, especially towards the end; and it seems not unlikely that a friend was employed afterwards to fill up the hiatus. But the modern critics alluded to go further than this: whole movements are attributed to the great composer's humble contemporary, who seems to have come forward at the time and laid claim to certain portions which bear the stamp of Mozart's genius to such a degree as to throw discredit upon his avowalas admitted by the critics themselves, who in turn seem puzzled by their own rash strictures. They also take it for granted as a fact that the well-known Twelfth Mass was not Mozart's at all, but the work of one Zelner; and another Mass in the list is attributed to somebody else!

Much difficulty, it must be admitted, often attaches itself to the recognition of posthumous works; efforts perhaps deemed by the composer, at the time, unworthy of him, and thus cast aside. In some cases these may be exercises written by disciples, and retained in the master's portfolio, and then produced after death as his It is not uncommon for small fugitive pieces to find their way into the market, wrongly attributed by the publisher to some great master (it is to be hoped not by Thus 'Weber's last Waltz,' so called, is declared (probably with truth) to be the work of his pupil Reissiger. And, possibly, the waltz designated 'Le Désir,' usually attributed to Beethoven, may be in reality the composition of Schubert. Nevertheless, these considerations will hardly influence connoisseurs to rely on the odd ideas now promulgated respecting certain of Mozart's greatest and most enduring works. The literary public are familiar with the various speculations started about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, even to the

extent of denying that individual's existence at all. And the shade of the most celebrated Greek poet of antiquity is never allowed to be at peace. The genuineness of the works attributed to him for 2500 years is constantly disputed. But the musical public need hardly be in such perplexity about the merits of departed genius in the preceding generation, or of monuments of art which are comparatively modern.

W. A.

October, 1869.

THE

GREAT COMPOSERS.

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PROBABLY no subject carries so great an advantage to a lecturer as the one selected for this evening. Music is almost sure to enlist the sympathies of everybody; but, independently of its successful appeal in that direction, authors in all ages have borne testimony to its value, and of the polite arts in general, in humanizing the world. An ancient Latin poet has thus expressed it—

'didicisse fideliter artes, Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros,'

which, when paraphrased, means that a due proficiency in the (fine) arts forms an effective engine for the improvement of the moral character, and turns the mind away from grosser objects to those of a more refined nature. There is an oft-quoted line to the same purpose—

'Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast.'

And the language of Shakespeare is very forcible—

Jessica: I am never merry when I hear sweet musick. Lorenzo: The reason is, your spirits are attentive: For do but note a wild and wanton herd, Or race of youthful and unhandled colts, Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud, Which is the hot condition of their blood; If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound, Or any air of musick touch their ears. You shall perceive them make a mutual stand, Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze, By the sweet power of musick: therefore the poet Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods; Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage, But musick for the time doth change his nature. The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affections dark as Erebus: Let no such man be trusted. Merchant of Venice, Act V. scene 1.

It would occupy too much time to trace

the mere history of music, sacred and secular. In these days of ecclesiastical revivalism much attention has been directed to the obsolete music of ancient liturgies. Inquiries into such a subject would certainly be interesting to a musician, if only to exhibit the relation of our present musical scale to the ancient Greek modes on which this ancient music is presumed to be based. It would appear that S. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (A.D. 374 to 397), chose from the ancient Greek modes four series or successions of notes, and called them simply the first, second, third, and fourth tones, laying completely aside the ancient heathen names of Doric, Phrygian, Lydian, Ionic, &c. S. Gregory the Great, who governed the Christian Church from A.D. 591 to 604, added four additional tones. These eight ecclesiastical successions or scales, which still exist as such in the music of the Roman Liturgy, are called Gregorian, after their founder. Thus the old Ambrosian chant is known at present only through the medium of the Gregorian. A German

writer speaks of a MS. of the Gregorian chants at St Gall, in Switzerland, as old as the ninth century. This may be the oldest MS. of the tones in existence. I myself possess a Latin work printed in 1483, in the binding of which vellum is used, having church music written on it as early as the eleventh century. The author of the Latin work in question is Politian, tutor in Greek to Lorenzo di Medici, founder of the Medicean Library; and it is probable the vellum employed in the binding was taken from some of the MSS. in that celebrated collection. Some persons, evincing a passion for everything merely ancient, have attempted to reproduce these antiquated chants by adapting and harmonizing them for use in the English It may be questioned, however, whether the effect is good, or even legitimate. To my mind, Lord Mornington's well-known chant is worth a score of such.

We may now turn to matters more useful for our present purpose. An idea has gained ground amongst some that England cannot be

named alongside of some continental nations in the production of music by native composers. This cannot be accepted as an absolute fact. The publications of the Antiquarian Musical Society contain a vast store of beautiful part writing for voices, emanating from English composers of the seventeenth century. Some of their names are doubtless familiar to you. I mention one, Purcell. His music, sacred and secular, is amongst the finest the world has known; and we have Matthew Locke, whose music to Macbeth is popular. Some think him the composer of our National Anthem, 'God save the Queen;' but this is doubtful. At a later period flourished Dr Arne, whose 'Artaxerxes' was perhaps the first English opera produced on the stage. He was born 1710, died 1788. He composed our national melody 'Rule Britannia,' and the popular song from Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' 'Where the Bee sucks.' Italy, it must be confessed, has always carried off the palm in vocal music, not only as respects performers, but composition—that is,

in public estimation. Indeed, the musical faculty seems born in an Italian; or, at any rate, the power of giving utterance to a melody. Festa is one of the most pleasing Italian composers of early date; he flourished during the first half of the sixteenth century. He was appointed in 1517 one of the singers in the Papal Chapel at Florence, his native city, and died in 1545. His madrigal, styled in the English version 'Down in a Flowery Vale,' is a most popular piece of vocal harmony. Probably the greatest name at that period is Palestrina, born in the year 1524. The real name of this illustrious composer was Giovanni Pierinigi, and he was called Palestrina from his birth-place, a village of that name (the ancient Præneste), near Rome. His Mass for six voices excited great enthusiasm among the cardinals. His 'Stabat Mater' and Motetts are extraordinary works; he created a new era in music, and his grandeur and solemnity of style are scarcely to be equalled. He died in 1594.

It is hardly within our province to notice here

violinists as such; yet there is one name which cannot well be passed by—Archangelo Corelli, born in the territory of Bologna, 1653. The sweetness and beauty of his melodies are only equalled by his skill in harmonious progressions. His twelve sonatas or solos for violin with bass have long been considered masterpieces for stringed instruments. He died in 1713. On his tombstone are engraved a few bars of a celebrated movement composed by him.

Pergolesi was born in 1710. He superseded the dry and heavy style of Scartatti the elder. His most famous production was the 'Stabat Mater.'

Paisiello was born in 1741. He was great in operas, and died at Naples in 1816.

Thus far we have spoken of the early English and Italian composers. The German school has long held a foremost place. Less fluent, perhaps, in the production of melody, it has developed wonderful efforts in instrumentation. The name of Glück, however, stands foremost as a composer of operas, scarcely in-

'Esther,' 'Saul,' 'Samson,' 'Judas Maccabæus,' and 'Jephtha.' He composed also capital works in the shape of fugues and studies for the harpsichord. He died in 1759, æt. 75.

We now approach a new era in the science of sounds. The musical world had hitherto witnessed the triumphs of great names. Nothing in sacred music seemed finer than the effects of Palestrina and Pergolesi; the contrapuntal skill of a Bach appeared to have swallowed up all that had gone before it. Paisiello and Glück had almost left nothing to be desired on the stage of the lyric drama—the one catering for the mellifluous smoothness of the Italian sensibility, and the other ministering to the ponderous stateliness of the Teutonic disposition.

But the resources of the art were about to assume a wider range. Three composers were destined to appear in succession, each of the highest genius, and each, more or less, a disciple of the other, and yet all three original. The noble triumvirate established a school in each department far in advance of their predecessors

—Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, whether in instrumental or vocal composition, struck out a new path for themselves. The music for the Church underwent an elaborate change, especially in the hands of the first two; while the second (Mozart), in opera ultimately eclipsed all who had gone before. Even for oratorio the great Handel found a rival in Haydn. Orchestral and chamber music too were to find representatives, who should inaugurate a new reign.

Francis Joseph Haydn was born on the last day of March, 1732, at Rohrau, a small town 15 leagues from Vienna. His father was a cartwright, and his mother had been cook in the family of the lord of the village. He displayed a love of music at the early age of six. He may be said to be the founder of modern instrumental music, as he was positively the inventor of the symphony. Till his day the orchestra comprised chiefly stringed instruments, with the occasional addition of oboes, bassoons, and a trumpet. The real drawback to Handel, great as he is, is the thinness of his instrumentation. To

remedy this defect in the case of the Messiah, additional accompaniments have been added by Mozart. Such a proceeding, under ordinary circumstances, might be considered an impertinence, as tampering with the effusion of a great mind, for it might well be said, 'Who could add to Handel?' But herein was a graceful act performed by a kindred spirit. Scarcely any but the genius of a Mozart could be entrusted with such a task. Mendelssohn subsequently, in a like way, has added a finished, yet unobtrusive, organ accompaniment to the 'Israel in Egypt.' Handel's 'Messiah' is now rarely performed without Mozart's additional accompaniments.

But to return to Haydn. His biographer says of him as follows:—'In symphony he is the first of the first; in sacred music he opened a new path, liable, it is true, to criticism; but by which he has placed himself on a level with the greatest geniuses. In the third, that is, theatrical music, he was only respectable, and this for many reasons, of which one of the best is, that in this department he was only an imitator.

The symphonies of Haydn, like the orations of Cicero, form a vast magazine, in which all the resources of the art are to be found. seems to have written a great number of symphonies, some say 118, others 138, and others again make out not less than 180. About the year 1700 he visited England, and again in 1794-5, when Salomon, a violinist of repute in London, commissioned him to write 12 grand symphonies for a series of concerts. These, dedicated to Salomon, are considered by some his most finished works in that department. cannot be denied, however, that a few of his earlier ones (numbered singly by letters of the English alphabet) are quite equal to them. He composed also 83 quartetts for stringed instruments. Many of these are masterpieces in their way. Probably the work by which he is best known in this country is his oratorio, the 'Creation,' completed in the beginning of the year 1798. The orchestral introduction represents Chaos. Music reappears in all her charms in Haydn's oratorio when the angels begin to

relate the great work of the Creation. We soon come to the passage which describes the creation of light,

'And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.'

It must be confessed that nothing can have a grander effect. Before this fiat of the Creator the musician has gradually diminished the chords; he introduces the unison, and, the softness growing still softer as the suspended cadence approaches, at last this cadence burst forth in the most sonorous manner at the words

'And there was light.'

This burst of the whole orchestra in the resounding key of C, accompanied with all the harmony possible, and prepared by the gradual fading of the sounds, actually produces upon us at a first representation the effect of a thousand torches, suddenly flashing light into a dark cavern. Two years after the 'Creation,' Haydn, animated by success, composed a new oratorio, 'The Four Seasons,' and it would be the finest thing extant in the department of descriptive music if the 'Creation' did not exist. He him-

self said, in reference to these two works (after the 'Seasons' had been performed for the first time), "In the 'Creation' the actors are angels; here they are peasants."

It cannot be denied that Haydn excelled also in church music. His masses, 15 in number, are as fine as anything can be. The ideal part is brilliant, and in general dignified; the style is noble, full of fire, and finely developed; the amens and hallelujahs breathe all the reality of joy, and are of a spirit unequalled. His set of descriptive songs or ballads, styled canzonets, are most charming. Haydn's music is remarkable for its prodigal luxuriance of melody, for its exhilarating and unaffected character, and for freshness of thought. This illustrious composer died on the 31st May, 1809.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born 27th January, 1756, at Salzburg; the particulars of this great man's life are too well known to need repetition here, even if time permitted. He lived scarcely 36 years, and produced a multitude of works in every department of composi-

His father, Leopold Mozart, was an able The child's precocity was greater violinist. than that of Haydn. It is related that at five years old, he invented little pieces of music which he played to his father. When six years old he was carried round and exhibited at the different Courts of Germany, where he performed upon the harpsichord (or pianoforte). He had not even occasion for lessons. He then studied the violin with much success. In April, 1764, the family came to England, when the young genius performed on the organ at the chapel royal. We possess nine operas composed by Mozart to Italian words; the second composed at 14 years of age! The principal of these are the 'Nozze de Figaro,' and 'Don Giovanni; and three German operas, of which the most striking is the 'Zauberflöte.' He has left 17 symphonies for a full orchestra, and instrumental pieces of all kinds. His ten quartetts and six quintetts, for stringed instruments, are truly splendid compositions. His pianoforte sonatas are greatly admired. Indeed, he

was one of the finest pianoforte performers of his day. As early as the year 1785, Haydn said to Mozart's father, then at Vienna, 'I declare to you before God, and on my honour, that I regard your son as the greatest composer I ever heard of.' His Catholic masses hold a foremost place in public estimation, the twelfth mass being continually performed at this day on every special occasion. Mozart was remarkable for simplicity of manners; moreover he was entirely ignorant of business. An old harpsichord tuner came to put some strings to his travelling pianoforte. 'Well, my good old fellow,' says Mozart to him, 'what do I owe you? I leave to-morrow.' The poor man, regarding him as a sort of deity, replied stammering and confounded, 'Imperial Majesty! the maitre de chapelle of his imperial majesty! Ah! I cannot—it is true that I have waited upon you several times—you shall give me a crown.' 'A crown!' replied Mozart; 'a worthy fellow like you ought not to be put out of his way for a crown; and he gave him some ducats. The honest man as he withdrew continued to repeat, with low bows, 'Ah! Imperial Majesty!' Mozart's pursuit of his art was continuous and unremitting, and his health began to fail. The weaker he became the more he persevered—nothing sufficed to draw his attention on one side; and fits of melancholy set in, as might be expected. The last composition he penned was a Requiem or solemn service for the dead. A very remarkable story is related of the circumstances which led to the composition of this piece, which was scarcely finished at the time of his death. One day, when he was plunged in a profound reverie, he heard a carriage stop at his door. A stranger was announced, who requested to speak to him. A person was introduced, handsomely dressed, of dignified and impressive manners. 'I have been commissioned, sir, by a man of considerable importance, to call upon you.' 'Who is he?' interrupted Mozart. 'He does not wish to be known.' 'Well, what does he want?' 'He has just lost a person whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory will be eternally dear to him. He is desirous of annually commemorating this mournful event by a solemn service, for which he requests you to compose a requiem.' Mozart was forcibly struck by this discourse, by the grave manner in which it was uttered, and by the air of mystery in which the whole was involved. He engaged to write the 'Requiem.' The stranger continued, 'Employ all your genius on this work; it is destined for a connoisseur.' 'So much the better.' 'What time do you require?' 'A month.' 'Very well: in a month's time I shall return. price do you set on your work?' 'A hundred ducats.' The stranger counted them on the table and disappeared. Mozart remained lost in thought for some time; he then suddenly called for pen, ink, and paper, and, in spite of his wife's entreaties, began to write. This rage for composition continued for several days; he wrote day and night with an ardour which seemed continually to increase; but his constitution, already in a state of great debility, was

unable to support this enthusiasm. One morning he fell senseless, and was obliged to suspend his work. Two or three days after, when his wife sought to divert his mind from the gloomy presages which occupied it, he said to her abruptly, 'It is certain that I am writing this Requiem for myself; it will serve for my funeral service.' Nothing could remove this impression from his mind. As he went on he felt his strength diminish from day to day, and the score advanced slowly. The month he had fixed being expired, the stranger again made his appearance. 'I have found it impossible,' said Mozart, 'to keep my word.' 'Do not give yourself any uneasiness,' replied the stranger; 'what further time do you require?' 'Another month: the work has interested me more than I expected, and I have extended it much beyond what I had first designed.' 'In that case it is just to increase the premium; here are fifty ducats more.' 'Sir,' said Mozart, with increasing astonishment, 'who then are you?' 'That is nothing to the purpose; in a month's

time I shall return.' Mozart immediately called one of his servants and ordered him to follow this extraordinary personage, and find out who he was; but the man failed for want of skill, and returned without being able to trace him. Poor Mozart was then persuaded that he was no ordinary being; that he had a connection with the other world, and was sent to announce to him his approaching end. He applied himself with the more ardour to his Requiem, which he regarded as the most durable monument of his genius. While thus employed, he was seized with the most alarming fainting fits; but the work was at length got through before the expiration of the month. At the time appointed the stranger returned; but Mozart was no more, having hardly completed his thirty-sixth year. It is unnecessary to realize the truth of this melancholy episode, probably the offspring of a dream.

We have now to speak of one who has done more than any before him to revolutionize music, whose compositions were deemed at first

so extravagant that the best informed musicians, at the commencement of the present century, almost universally set their face against what they termed his crude efforts, which they considered to have set all legitimate rules at defiance—we allude to Ludwig Van Beethoven, born 1770. Indeed it was long before his works were admitted into the domain of what was feasible or agreeable. In the year 1792, being then 22 years of age, he went to Vienna, in order to improve himself under the tuition of Haydn. A coolness, however, subsequently sprang up between them. In the earlier compositions of Beethoven we may certainly detect the influence of Mozart: not that Beethoven was in any respect a copyist; and he was not long in striking out a path for himself. compositions are very numerous, especially his solo sonatas for the pianoforte. He also produced some for pianoforte and violin, and a few for pianoforte and violoncello, some stringed trios, and a few for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello-17 quartetts, about four of which are

posthumous; nine symphonies—the last of which, with chorus added, founded on Schiller's 'Ode to Joy,' was composed for the Philharmonic Society of London; two masses (one being posthumous); a grand opera, 'Fidelio,' for which he composed four overtures, being dissatisfied with his own efforts. The one usually styled the overture to 'Fidelio' is a brilliant orchestral prelude. The one commonly styled 'Leonora' overture is perhaps the finest work of the kind done by him. He also produced a grand septuor for stringed and wind instruments mixed; a number of songs, one of the most exquisite of which is entitled 'Adelaida,' for a tenor voice; a superb concerto for the violin; several concertos for the pianoforte; an oratorio, 'The Mount of Olives,' which, however, is somewhat too dramatic, and deficient in the seriousness and solemnity requisite in that class of composition. He has also given to the world certain other overtures, among the best of which is 'Coriolanus.' His career has been divided by his biographers into three periods. First period from his birth to the year 1800. Second period from 1800 to 1813, and the third from 1813 till his death in 1827. To the first period belong about 25 pianoforte sonatas, two concertos for that instrument, the septuor and the first and second symphonies, together with his first six quartetts. To the second period his oratorio, the 'Mount of Olives,' 'Sinfonia Eroica' in honour of Napoleon, opera of 'Fidelio,' and certain quartetts. To the third period, the posthumous quartetts, the second mass, and the 9th symphony. Beethoven was reserved and abrupt in manner, disdained all flattery, and was for the most part difficult of access. Undoubtedly the heavy drawback to his happiness was a deafness quite incurable, that set in about the year 1810 or earlier. During the years 1820-21, Beethoven was in pecuniary distress, and during this time the Philharmonic Society, of London, rendered him substantial aid. He died March, 1827. It may be said that, though Haydn created the symphony, Beethoven re-created it. His genius was untrammelled by conventionalities; and the grandeur of his conceptions is now universally recognized.

We have now disposed of the great classical composers who flourished before our day. Beethoven has been fairly lost to the world for half a century. He, with his two predecessors, Mozart and Haydn, may, however, be considered the founders of the modern school of music. The present age has witnessed a host of composers in all styles, and of varied excellence; but our object has been to select the giants of the art. Two have still to be mentioned in this category who have lately passed away from among us, Spohr and Mendelssohn. We are not concerned with stars whose light shone on any particular instrument. Thus we have passed many distinguished names—Clementi, Hummel, Ries, Viotti, Paganini, Moscheles, &c., and for the same reason we do not dwell upon the merits of Chopin, the Tennyson of the pianoforte, and a composer of undoubted genius. At first sight Spohr should be excluded with

these, because his specialty was the violin; but there are features in his career which entitle him to rank with the fathers of the art. So, too, Mendelssohn, who, though specially a composer for the pianoforte, yet showed such diversity of talent as to place him in the first rank as a general composer. Both these instances furnish points of contact with the highest geniuses in every department of the art.

Louis Spohr was born in 1784. He early commenced his career as a violinist, in which line, as we all know, he attained the highest eminence, and formed an illustrious school of pupils, among whom is our great English violinist, Henry Blagrove. In 1813, when 29 years of age, he composed his opera 'Faust,' which deservedly holds a high place in the judgment of connoisseurs. Ten years afterwards appeared his opera 'Jessonda,' which was received with every mark of favour. He composed other operas; but these two were his best. Two oratorios, the 'Last Judgment' and 'Calvary,' enhanced his reputation considerably. The

former especially ranks among the finest examples of the art in that style. It is hardly necessary to speak here of Spohr's violin concertos with orchestral accompaniments. Most of them would do credit to any composer for his own instrument, and some of them are really striking compositions. One in particular, familiarly known as the 'Dramatic Concerto,' written in imitation of an operatic scena, is quite calculated to stamp him as a composer of the highest order. The recitative, ushered in by an effective orchestral prelude, is very characteristic. Then follows an air full of pathos, and diversified in the most charming manner. The concerto then winds up with an elaborate bravura movement, and before the close, a written cadenza is introduced in keeping with the whole. Though intended as a show piece for the violin, there are about it a completeness and an originality which will win for it a place where nearly all compositions of a like character are forgotten. As Spohr advanced in years he neglected to play in public, so that I have scarcely ever heard him

perform; and this concerto was rarely produced by him before public audiences in Germany or elsewhere, during the last 25 years; but I have frequently heard it performed by his distinguished pupil, Mr Blagrove, so lately as at the Gloucester festival, in 1865; and I take leave to say that it has never been played so well, except in the case of the composer himself. He composed several symphonies, some being of unequal merit, and a number of quartetts, quintetts, and combinations of wind and stringed instruments mixed; also a number of songs. Spohr's style was not spontaneous, but heavy and studied. His great point lay in his knowledge of orchestral effects; and of this he was certainly a profound master; and in his slow movements he exhibited a great refinement, coupled with a majestic feeling which never fails to attract the true connoisseur. Spohr died in 1859.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was born in 1809, of an opulent family, and himself possessed of a considerable fortune. His grand-

father was Moses Mendelssohn, distinguished as a poet and philosopher. The young musician early excelled as a pianist of the highest rank; but, as is well known, produced compositions of almost every class during his short career. The work by which he is best known is his music to Shakspeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' produced when young. It is needless here to speak of his compositions in detail, so well known are they at the present time. Who requires to be reminded of the beauties which abound in his two oratorios, 'St Paul' and 'Elijah'? What pianist in the present day is not in possession of his two pianoforte concertos; and those charming little inventions styled 'Lieder ohne Worte,' wherein naive melodies are overlaid with accompaniment figures, as fascinating as they are original? What chamber choir is without his elegant part songs? Mendelssohn has been charged with mannerism, and with repeating himself; and so especially has Spohr. But what great man has not? What great author, what distinguished orator?

The very circumstance itself indicates the individuality of genius. Mendelssohn, like Mozart, injured his health by unremitting application, and, like that poetical musician, was cut off in the prime of life. He died in 1847, when only 38 years of age. His death produced a profound sensation in the musical world. The best copyright editions of his works are published by Messrs Ewer and Co., of London.

The list of the German school would be incomplete without mention of Carl Maria Von Weber, born in 1786; he was thus a contemporary of Beethoven and Spohr. He died in 1826, having, like Mozart and Mendelssohn, hardly reached middle age. He is best remembered by certain operas, which, from their striking originality, achieved a great success. We need but refer to his 'Der Freischütz,' wherein he paints so successfully the weird and supernatural. His fairy opera, 'Oberon,' was perhaps a weaker work, but full of grace and brilliancy. He shone in his overtures; their fire and dash are irresistible. He was hardly so

meritorious in chamber music; but his crowning effort for the pianoforte is the Concert-Stück with orchestral accompaniments, one of the most effective pieces extant for that instrument.

The French school of music is not characterized by much solidity. Méhul and Boieldieu attract but little attention now.

Cherubini, though Italian by birth (born 1760, at Florence), yet subsequently became associated with the French school, being long settled in Paris, as director of the Conservatoire de Musique. He was a scientific harmonist, author of a most useful work on counterpoint. His compositions are as a rule more clever than engaging. He composed several operas, which have never attained a very great deal of suc-The overtures to them, however, are skilful and striking, such, for example, as that to 'Anacreon' and 'Les deux Journées,' which latter is to my fancy a really grand work, especially the opening portion of it. He has composed some excellent music for the Catholic service. Cherubini's style may be said to present an eclectic mixture of the German, Italian, and French styles. He died in 1847.

Auber was a pupil of Cherubini. His compositions are sparkling and attractive, but superficial, and thus quite different from those of his master, Cherubini.

Herold is another example in the same style. His 'Pré aux Clercs' and 'Zampa' are well-known operas, and the overtures to them are very frequently performed at concerts. His instrumentation, like that of Auber, though piquant, is frothy and unsubstantial.

Meyerbeer, born 1794, at Berlin, is mainly indebted for his renown to five or six grand operas, the most celebrated of which are the 'Robert le Diable,' 'Les Huguenots,' and 'Le Prophète.' Like Cherubini, he combines the peculiarities of the German, Italian, and French schools; but there is an intensity and dramatic fervour, added to a mystic gloom, which is more akin to Weber's disposition. He is lately deceased.

Charles Gounod, born at Paris 1815, is just

now much in vogue owing to the success of his opera entitled 'Faust,' which, though partaking somewhat of the showy French style, yet presents dramatic situations of great power.

We would add a word or two respecting the modern Italian school of which the illustrious Rossini is the father. He was born 1792 at Pesaro, and is still living.\* He composed, as we all know, a profusion of operas. The most remarkable of these, as it is also his latest, is the 'William Tell.' One of his latest efforts is a Stabat Mater, which, though clever, can hardly be considered other than a caricature of sacred music, there being nothing sacred in it. Some think that Meyerbeer, in his 'Huguenots,' borrowed many ideas and passages from the 'William Tell.'

Bellini is almost too well known and appreciated to need mention; he died in 1835. His operas 'Sonnambula,' 'Norma,' and 'Puritani,' are deservedly popular, abounding, as they do, in tender pathetic sentiment.

<sup>\*</sup> Deceased 1869.

Donizetti, who died in 1848, was certainly a most gifted composer. His well-known operas 'l'Elisir d'Amore,' 'Lucrezia Borgia,' and 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' abound in 'graceful melody. It is said that he composed as many as 50 operas. It may be added that he wrote hurriedly and without finish.

We would say a word or two about our native composers of the present day. Sterndale Bennett, born in 1808, was a pupil of Dr Crotch and Cipriani Potter in the Royal Academy of Music, and an intimate friend of Mendelssohn, with whom he spent much time in Leipsic. He has composed symphonies and operas, also many overtures skilfully framed and highly attractive, besides songs and pianoforte pieces. His pianoforte works are equal to anything now extant, his fourth concerto being a piece of extraordinary merit. In melody he rivals Mendelssohn, while his instrumentation is not only faultless, but exhibits the highest polish and refinement. He has had the degree of Doctor of Music conferred upon him at

Cambridge, and is now the Professor of Music in that university.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, Mus. Doc., son of Samuel Wesley, a celebrated composer, deceased, does full honour to his father's name, having achieved a high reputation as a musician, both in this country and on the continent, and gained the friendship of those gifted men, Spohr and Mendelssohn. Dr Wesley's compositions display profound contrapuntal skill and great originality in design. It may be affirmed, without fear of contradiction, that Dr Wesley is the greatest living performer on the organ. Those who have once heard him play are not likely soon to forget the impression produced.

George Alexander Macfarren, born 1812, is a composer of high merit—probably one of the best contrapuntists living. He has produced works of an enduring kind, both operas and overtures, and has perfected many talented pupils. His compositions have been undeservedly neglected. John Lodge Ellerton, though possessed of a considerable independent fortune, and thus ranking as an amateur, has devoted a life to musical composition, having contributed largely to every department of the art—opera, symphony, oratorio, church music, and stringed quartett. His oratorio 'Paradise Lost,' which has been performed in public, would alone sustain the reputation of any great musician, while his quartetts abound in elegant conceptions and finished writing. Several of his masses have been executed both in London and on the continent, and greatly admired.

Report speaks well of Arthur Sullivan, a young composer of high promise, who completed his education at Leipsic.

We have thus ended our imperfect survey of a beautiful and ennobling art, the rapid progress of which in this country during the last 30 years is a striking fact. England has never been without good native musicians, as before remarked. But the musical taste of the general public has never been on a par with that of

Germany or Italy till now. The success of the Sacred Harmonic Society, instituted for the performance of oratorio, and of the Monday Popular Concerts, which are thronged by multitudes anxious to listen to the chamber compositions of the great masters, attest this. It is a singular fact, but not less true, that the first public quartett concert in this country was given by Mr Dando, at the Horn Tavern, Doctors' Commons, on the 23rd September, 1835. The pleasures of music, though fleeting, live long in our memories, and it is to be presumed leave no traces of unhealthy action, but rather point to the exercise of a privilege accorded to the highest orders of intelligence.

## **VIOLINISTS**

## AND THE VIOLIN.

The progress of music, as an art, can hardly be said to form an exception to the rule which holds good in reference to other arts, or even sciences. The beginnings are generally rude in proportion to the want of knowledge, and the absence of civilization. Still, in the case of the polite arts, allowance in some degree must be made for the setting in of peculiar tastes arising out of religious or social influences. Moreover, occasionally, some master spirit considerably in advance of the age in point of intellectuality appears on the scene, and the results of his labours give a sudden impetus which

culminates in a total change of taste, and opinions, at any rate, for the time being. In the case of the inductive sciences, the brilliant talents of Lord Bacon shone conspicuously, and exerted a beneficial influence in favour of increased experimental researches. So with painting and sculpture, the influence of Raffaelle and Michael Angelo was strongly visible in the labours of their contemporaries and successors. Again, in the sister art, it is impossible to overestimate the immense superiority of J. Sebastian Bach to all others in his generation. The names of Glück and Handel run pretty much in the same parallel.

But to come nearer to our own subject, the great Genoese performer, who, at the beginning of the present century, took the world of connoisseurs by surprise, seems to have created a new interest in the study of the violin. It is at any rate certain that the entire modern school has become, through him, revolutionized; though perhaps not altogether in a healthy manner. But, the Paganini fever having in

present day serve as models for modern students of that instrument.

We commence, then, with G. B. Viotti, as the first violinist of his age, and the originator of the modern style. We learn that he was born in 1755 at Fontaneto, a small village in His progress under his master Piedmont. (Pugnani) was rapid; so much so that at 20 years of age he received the appointment of first violin to the Chapel of Turin. At the expiration of three years, he travelled, first to Berlin and afterwards to Paris, where his arrival produced a prodigious sensation. The Parisians had been accustomed for ten years to the ephemeral and shallow pretensions of Jarnovick, whose music soon became extinct when brought into contact with that of his superior rival. The qualities of Viotti as a composer were no less conspicuous than those displayed in his perform-In fact, his concertos were as superior to those which had been previously heard, as his execution surpassed that of all his predecessors and rivals. As a performer, he was distinguished

by a fine tone, elegance of expression, much fire, and varied style.

For some reason, not easily explained, this great artiste, very early in his career, abstained from the practice of solo playing in public. Moreover, his stay in the French capital was abruptly terminated by the revolutionary outbreak of 1790, when he took refuge in England. His début in London at Salomon's concerts was as successful as that at Paris. The perfection of his playing was beyond all praise. Several years afterwards, the Philharmonic Society having been established, Viotti took his place in the orchestra, alternately as principal and subordinate.

But, in the mean time, having been suspected of engaging in political intrigue, he was, about the year 1795, expelled the British dominions, whence he betook himself to Holland, finding refuge in Schönfeld, a secluded spot near Hamburg. Declining all offers to play in public, he now devoted himself exclusively to composition. In 1801 we again find

him in London. Instead, however, of regularly pursuing his artistic vocation, he entered into commerce, in which it would appear that he sustained heavy losses. It was during this period that he officiated in the orchestra of the Philharmonic Society on its establishment. He now solicited an appointment from the French Court, and received from Louis XVIII. the nomination to the management of the Grand Opera; which, however, he soon relinquished, retiring on a pension. And having once more returned to London, he died about the year 1824.\*

His works are numerous, consisting of many concertos with orchestral accompaniments, several sets of interesting and ingenious duetts for two violins, sonatas, trios, &c.

Viotti qualified many pupils, some of whom rose to high eminence as violinists. The most distinguished amongst them undoubtedly was

<sup>\*</sup> Dubourg says his death took place on the 3rd of March, 1824; but a MS. of one of his pupils, lately deceased, gives 1832 as the year of Viotti's death.

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Rode. This really great artiste was born at Bordeaux in 1774. His musical instincts developed themselves during infancy; and, after some preliminary instruction, he was sent, at the age of 13 years, to Paris. Here he was taken in hand by Viotti, who showed himself zealous in directing the studies of his youthful pupil. He made his public début in 1790, before a Parisian audience, in a concerto from the pen of his illustrious master. He appeared afterwards in the public performances at the Rue Feydeau, with marked success. In 1796, Rode commenced a professional tour, visiting Holland, Hamburg, and then the city of Berlin. We next find him in London, where he came into contact with his great preceptor, Viotti. But it does not appear that opportunities for exhibiting his truly great skill favoured him during his residence in the English metropolis: why, we are not informed. The disappointed artiste at last returns to Paris, the scene of his first triumphs. He now re-appeared with increased success at the Feydeau concerts, holding at the same time the post of Professor of the violin at the Conservatoire.

It is not our intention to give minute biographical notices of any artiste. Suffice it to say that, after another tour, we find Rode again at Paris, about the year 1808. At this period of his career we are informed that a marked change had taken place in his style: his delivery, from having been fervid and energetic, seemed now to have become apathetic. the purity of his mechanism seemed unimpaired. Though depressed for a time by the want of success, he still yearned for increased fame in distant quarters, and seemed no way reconciled to a relinquishment of his once brilliant career. After another mortifying effort in Paris, he returned home to die in 1830.

It cannot be doubted that the talents of this consummate violinist exercised a marked influence over the race of executants who flourished at the beginning of the present century. His predecessor had wrought a great change in the state of the art, as we have before seen. The Italian

element gave a polish almost cloying; supported, as it was, by dignity and elevation of style. But it was reserved for his pupil to develope a concentrated energy and subtle delicacy, set off by a subdued pathos; qualities which, in combination, served as an admirable example for the after school to follow, engendering refinement both as to subject and mode of treatment. Indeed the questions of composition and performance became, as it were, blended here.

In the works of Rode we discern decided genius. His concertos will be prized so long as the violin is played. One of these (No. 7) in A minor, has been introduced as a model for study by Spohr in his Violin School. But, to our thinking, the one (No. 8) in E minor is the crowning work. The opening subject has a melancholy grandeur about it that strikes the fancy at once; though it must be admitted that the second subject (in the relative major key) hardly rises so high, being rather French in character. Still, the movement as a whole

is one which developes the sterling qualities of a The final movements of all the conviolinist. certos at this period appear to our modern ears rather trivial, and are now seldom played. remark also applies to Viotti's concertos. may cite Viotti (No. 24) in B minor as equal in merit to Rode in E minor. In after years we possess a concerto by Spohr (No. 7), in E minor, as a worthy companion to these two. Even in this case, the last movement, though quite in the style of the master, is hardly up to the mark in point of dignity, following, as it does, a most exquisite slow movement. But, returning to Rode, how shall we characterize his matchless studies ('caprices')?---a series intended to develope the powers of the student, yet put together in a most fascinating manner. have heard some of these executed in their original form (solus) by Mr Blagrove in public; and the effect, even in these days of transcendental passage playing, was most satisfactory, the genius of Rode suffering nothing by comparison with more modern art.

Contemporary with Rode were two violinists who also rendered the French school illustrious. We allude to Kreutzer and Baillot. First, Rudolph Kreutzer, born at Versailles in 1766, received his early instructions from A. Stamitz, a moderate musician of the German School. He was subsequently placed under the tuition of Gaviniès, a matured artiste of high standing, but who hardly comes under our notice here as one of the moderns. We learn, however, that young Kreutzer's talent received a fresh impetus from contact with the great Viotti, who was about 11 years his senior.

The style of Kreutzer's performance seems to have been somewhat original, but devoid of that tendresse and elegance which characterized Rode; while probably he was inferior to Viotti in breadth. He must be looked upon as a bold ingenious performer, one who founded a school for the instrument, a kind of offshoot from that which sprang out of the labours of Viotti and Rode. Early in his career he essayed the composition of opera upon a very slender basis of

contrapuntal knowledge. An acquaintance with the specimens which are extant, does not allow us to form a very high opinion of his efforts in this range of labour. His violin compositions, as such, are of a very different stamp. Though, perhaps, somewhat inferior to those of Rode, they possess very high merit. The opinion expressed with reference to Kreutzer's defective knowledge of the rules of composition finds confirmation in the crudely-managed modulations occasionally occurring in his best works. This is not the case, however, with one especial work that proceeded from his pen: we refer to his 'Forty Studies for the Violin,' which may be truly described as

## 'Monumentum ære perennius.'

His operas may be beneath notice, and the construction of his concertos and other works may exhibit traces of want of system, but, truly, there is 'method' here. It seems doubtful, indeed, if anything of the kind can be cited which has proved so beneficial to the young violinist as the said Forty Studies, which have

done duty for the past half-century. For the acquirement of the modern specialty termed the staccato, one of these exercises, written expressly to that end, has furnished the true key for many aspirants. We may here mention that another set of thirty-six Studies by one Fiorillo (of whom little more is known) have proved almost, perhaps quite, as great a boon to the violin-practising world. These latter have been recently edited by Spohr, that great master having added a second violin accompaniment: strong tribute of praise!

To sum up;—Rode, Kreutzer, and Fiorillo, as study writers, form a grand triumvirate quite unparalleled. The career of Kreutzer, unlike that of Rode, was unchequered by disappointment. After filling high posts in his profession, and being decorated with the Legion of Honour, he died at Geneva in 1831.

Pierre Baillot, of high name in the French school, followed in the wake of Kreutzer and Rode; each received the appointment of Professor at the Paris Conservatoire, and the three

conjointly prepared the violin 'Method' used there.

Baillot was born about the year 1770-1. He was at an early age instructed at Rome by a professor of the school of Tartini. Having reached Paris about the year 1795, he received his professorial appointment. He was pronounced an accomplished finished performer on the instrument; his tone was pure in quality, yet telling in its effect. Moreover, in the execution of the music before him, he displayed that attention to the various nicer shades of expression, which has uniformly characterized the best instances of the French school—the flexibility of his method enabling him to read each composition in its own peculiar character. Perhaps few professors qualified so many excellent pupils. His death took place in 1842.

We next find Habeneck, who, born in the year 1781, and having received instruction at a very early age from his father, an obscure performer in a military band, passed several years without a master, labouring all the while at

violin practice and composition. Admitted into the Paris Conservatoire at twenty years of age, as a pupil of Baillot, he soon distinguished himself, obtaining a first prize in 1804. For some years he filled the post of director of the concerts at the Conservatoire, and subsequently director of the opera, adding to these appointments that of first violin in the King's band.

(One of the best modern French violinists was a pupil of Habeneck, viz., Alard.)

Leaving the atmosphere of the Paris Conservatoire, we enter on another sphere of action, and there survey the progress of violin playing. And we must here mention the name of C. G. Kiesewetter, a native of Anspach, born in 1777, who rapidly acquired a high popularity in Germany as a solo performer. After holding for some time the post of leader of the band to the Hanoverian Court, he migrated to London in 1821. And we may here pause and note the condition of instrumental music in the English metropolis at this particular period.

The early part of the nineteenth century

was marked in this country by the presence of Viotti, as we have already seen, and subsequently by the establishment of the Philharmonic Society. These were the two most prominent circumstances affecting the progress of instrumental music at that period. For, in truth, the troubled condition of Europe was such as to leave people little to think or care about but 'wars and rumours of wars.' Moreover, there was no national school of musical art, no 'Royal Academy of Music,' up to that time. All interest in the art, in its higher form, was confined to the upper circles of society. How it fared in this country, under such circumstances, under such auspices, is matter of notoriety. The generality of the fashionable world attached itself to the Italian opera, almost exclusively; and, as is commonly observed, the musical art, per se, degenerated, simply because the public became more intent upon the performing stars than upon the music performed, or their conception of the merits of musical composition became merged in their judgment

upon the executants. They learned to praise a given work so far as it affords scope to the popular performer for the exhibition of his or her talents. Hence, such and such a work, in the hands of such and such a performer, became the rage for the time being.

The state of instrumental music at this time afforded an illustration of these observations. Salomon, an experienced and tasteful violinist, an offshoot of the early German school, had been for some years in the metropolis: his concerts were in vogue chiefly because he had engaged the great symphonist Haydn to write a series of twelve orchestral compositions. These (though in reality no way superior to many of his former works of the same kind) became naturally objects of public interest. Meanwhile, Yaniewitz, a good and sterling, though perhaps not an original, violinist, had appeared both as a soloist and leader; and about the same time Vaccari also, a polished performer of the Italian School, and subsequently Spagnoletti, a hardly less notable example of the

same class. But these artists, good in themselves, did nothing to raise the quality of violin playing except as executants; nothing new was effected; no concerts produced of an original character to call for remark. In due time, the Philharmonic Society, as we have seen, became established. The above-mentioned artists, Salomon, Yaniewitz, Vaccari, Spagnoletti, and last but not least the veteran Viotti, being the principal performers, though the latter had for some time abandoned the practice of solo playing. Occasionally the Philharmonic Society introduced at its concerts classical chamber works of the great masters; and unquestionably those artistes possessed the ability to do justice to such compositions.

Moreover, we may be quite sure that they often in private circles employed their leisure hours in circulating a taste for the incomparable quartetts of Mozart and Haydn amongst the amateurs of their days. Much had been due, as we have said, to the influence of Viotti, whose career, however, was now closed. But he

had grounded many pupils here: one of these, N. Mori (of whom more hereafter), soon became a rising violinist, and seemed destined to occupy a high place in the violin-playing world, being distinguished for his great mechanical skill and fine tone. J. Moralt, another disciple of the same master, became conspicuous on the viola. W. Watts, for many years afterwards principal second violin at the Philharmonic Society, must likewise be included in the same category. These with the illustrious Robert Lindley of violoncello renown, and the no less celebrated Dragonetti the giant of the double-bass, formed the nucleus of the 'stringed department' in the English metropolis.

It was just at this period (1821) that Kiese-wetter came to reside in London. And a greater than he (L. Spohr) had been invited over the previous year, for the first time, to play at the Philharmonic Society. But to return to Kiesewetter; his playing was energetic rather than exact, smart rather than graceful. In short, he was not an absolutely finished executant.

Still there was a dashing character about his performance which infused new life into the ideas of his contemporaries, who had been hitherto trammelled by too close an adherence to the form and mannerism of the old school. The 'method,' so to speak, of Viotti had done good service, but it was not calculated to last for ever.

Lafont, a pupil of Rode and Kreutzer, and one of the best violinists of his time, had become the idol of the French school; being, in fact, its most distinguished ornament. Again, Lipinski, a Polish violinist of considerable merit, had attracted much attention by his command over the resources of the instrument. Then. too, Mayseder, residing at Vienna, was not a whit behind these last-mentioned artistes, having acquired a considerable share of popularity in a comparatively short time. His playing was characterized by much brilliancy, while his compositions, though not profound, evinced decided individuality. Mayseder was born in 1789, and is now deceased.

Here then was the new school: and the English public obtained probably their first impressions of it from Kiesewetter, who, amongst other novelties, introduced the compositions of Mayseder with decided success. The violin now became in England an instrument of greater interest to the amateur and the public at large. The pertness, so to speak, of Kiesewetter's style had won many admirers. striking contrast presented itself in the genius of Spohr, whose majesty of style, however, was somewhat in advance of the popular taste. Royal Academy of Music was just then inaugurated. One of its first pupils, H. Blagrove, gave promise of the highest excellence. And, Kiesewetter's health failing just when a musical festival at Norwich was on the tapis, the youthful violinist, Blagrove, was brought forward, and played a concerto (Rode No. 4) in his stead. Kiesewetter died soon afterwards, in 1827.

At this particular time matters seemed in a transition state as regards violin playing. There were few special examples of fascination in the prevailing style, with the notable exception of Lafont and Mayseder; and, we may add, Spohr, but he was not fully appreciated then.\* The old school had passed away, and the new school was coming on. Flexibility of finger was more aimed at than before: the line of the bow hand and its elasticity were points that engaged the attention of students. Hence, more freedom of delivery, and, as a consequence, greater variety of style and effects, were attained. One great point was occasionally lost sight of; viz., firmness and breadth of tone. Nobody could lay this to the charge of Mr Mori. He was indefatigable: and probably his tone on the instrument rivalled that of his illustrious master in his palmy days. Indeed, few performers of more recent times come up to him in that respect. Probably the defect alluded to was most observable in the French school.

As has been observed, the modern school was in a state of transition. It was now about

<sup>\*</sup> De Beriot was young and hardly known to fame at this period.

to move along with more rapid strides. Lafont and Mayseder had succeeded to Rode and Kreutzer in public estimation. But the presence of a new planet became announced. The violin world was to be startled from its propriety by an apparition. The subject of Tartini's dream seemed about to be realized in person. With the single exception of Viotti, Italy had produced few men distinguished for excellence as instrumentalists.\* Hitherto, she was emphatically the 'Land of Song,' not of fiddling. It seemed her character in the latter respect was now being redeemed: the kingdom of Sardinia had given birth to a master-fiddler!

Nicolo Paganini was born in 1784 at Genoa. It has been noted that, where great genius is present, the particular instinct displays itself at an early age. Instances of this are common, especially in the musical art. The case of the remarkable man now under consider-

<sup>\*</sup> Corelli's name was, in relation to the modern school, a mere matter of history. Dragonetti, beyond being à double-bass player, had produced nothing.

ation forms no exception to the statement. An instrument was put into his hands the moment he could hold it: moreover, almost before the lapse of a few years, such was the force of genius, and such the attendant application, that a considerable degree of proficiency was attained. But so much continued study at an early age (carried on, it would seem, at the stern command of his father), threatened to undermine the powers of the child's constitution; and traces of this enervation presented themselves in after years. At eight years of age, we learn, he composed his first violin sonata (now lost); and a year later made his public début with immense success. Even at this early period, the juvenile performer had gone beyond his preceptors, and was seeking out new methods in the mechanism of the instrument,—laying the foundation of those wonderful effects which, in after years, enthralled the musical world, outstripping the most striking peculiarities of his most talented contemporaries. That this statement presents no exaggerated estimate the

sequel proves. However startling might be the impression produced by Viotti (just preceding), however satisfying the masterly excellence of Rode, a greater than either was entering on the scene. But we are anticipating. The father of the youthful violinist, already discerning a prospect of future gain accruing, subjected his sonto daily toils of unmitigated rigour. At the commencement of 1797, leaving Parma, where he had been placed for study under masters, Paganini was accompanied by his father on his first professional tour through the principal towns in Lombardy, and a reputation was commenced which never died out during his career. He then returned to his native place, Genoa, where he was compelled by his father to prosecute his studies with even greater assiduity than before. But the youthful artist's soul revolted at such degrading slavery, when an opportunity soon presented itself for deliverance from such disagreeable bonds. After much discussion, he was allowed to attend (under the protection of an elder brother) the fête of St Martin, celebrated annually by a musical festival at Lucca. Here he was received with enthusiasm.

Thus encouraged, he entered on a musical tour for himself, and soon amassed a sum equal to about a thousand pounds, the greater part of which he ultimately assigned for the use of his parents, his father being clamorous to obtain the whole. Paganini being young, and emancipated from all restraint, and with moral and intellectual education entirely neglected, and realizing money rapidly by the exercise of his talents, speedily launched into dissipation. was often embarrassed by the losses encountered at play; and was at times reduced even to part with his violin. In this condition he found himself at Leghorn, and was indebted to the kindness of a French merchant (M. Livron) for the loan of a violin, an excellent Guarneri. At the conclusion of the concert, Paganini brought it back to its owner, when this gentleman exclaimed, 'Never will I profane strings which your fingers have touched: that instrument is now yours.' This was the violin since used

by Paganini in all his concerts. Even this instrument once nearly shared the fate of its predecessor: on this occasion, an unexpected turn in the wheel of fortune set young Paganini straight again, and the circumstance proved the turning-point in his career; for, having just succeeded in saving this superlative violin, he determined on renouncing the fascination of the gaming table.

In 1804 he returned to Genoa, and seems to have occupied himself with composition. Towards the middle of 1805, he undertook a new tour in Italy. He visited Lucca, the scene of his first successes. He was then 21 years of age. The municipality of Lucca and Piombino had been organized that year in favour of the Princess Eliza, sister of Napoleon and the wife of Prince Bacchiochi. The court had fixed its residence in the town of Lucca. The great reputation of the violinist led the princess to offer him the posts of director of her private music, and conductor of the opera orchestra. Notwithstanding his propensity for independ-

ence of action, and the scantiness of the emolument, the position pleased him and he accepted.

In the summer of 1808, Paganini obtained leave to travel, visiting Leghorn, where seven years previously he had met with so much Here he was not received with the warmth extended to him on his former visit. But his talent soon overcame the coldness evinced towards him. From Leghorn he went to Turin. His court patroness had now become Grand Duchess of Tuscany; and fixed her residence at Florence with all her court. Paganini was now recalled to attend the court. He is said to have left Florence towards the end of 1800 to visit Romagna and Lombardy, and to have produced an extraordinary sensation at Rimini on 22nd January, 1810. It is related that on 16th August, 1811, he gave a concert at Parma which created the most profound impression both upon artistes and amateurs. About the end of 1812 or the beginning of 1813, his engagement at the court of Florence abruptly terminated, and he determined never again

to accept a fixed position however tempting.

Being at Milan about the spring of 1813, he experienced a return of a severe malady from which he had previously suffered, and which produced much debility in after years. It was at this period that he composed his famous variations on the 'Witches' Dance.' It was only on the 29th of October following that he was enabled to give his first concert there, exciting a sensation which the journals of Italy and Germany made known to the world.

In 1816 he was again at Genoa, while Lafont, the eminent French violinist, was at Milan. Anxious to hear his illustrious contemporary, Paganini repaired thither. An arrangement was made by which they were to play together in public. This meeting gave rise to a display of power on both sides. The Frenchman, of course, thought himself the victor: he was an accomplished violinist, and the idol of his own countrymen. There can be no doubt, however, that the great Italian carried the day. A similar circumstance occurred two years later

(1818), when the Polish violinist, Lipinski, entered into a contest with him in public, at Placentia, with no better result.

For these details respecting the career of this remarkable violinist, we are indebted to his biographer, M. Fetis. And we shall not pursue them much further. We will simply remark that on the 5th April, 1827, Pope Leo XII. decorated him with the order of the 'Golden Spur,' in recognition of his brilliant talents. In the spring of 1828, he proceeded to Vienna, where he was received with enthusiasm. And ovations were showered upon him in every town of Germany which he visited. He arrived in the French capital in 1831, and met with equal success. He'then appeared in London, where he was expected with the utmost impatience. His triumphs in England are too well known now to need recapitulation. returning to Italy he gave a concert at Plaisance (in 1834) for the benefit of the poor. A year or two after, the declension of his health became manifest. He was advised to retire for

change of air to Marseilles. One day, while suffering from great debility, he seemed to revive, and took part in a favourite quartett by Beethoven. He then returned to Genoa, his native place. Nice, however, was destined to be his last abode. Here he expired on the 27th of May, 1840, leaving to his only son Achille a fortune of £80,000. His favourite violin he bequeathed to the city of Genoa, where it now remains, never to be played upon by any other artiste.

This incomparable performer, without doubt, displayed as an executant a combination of qualities never hitherto attained by any other violinist. His resources on the finger board were without limit, and his manipulation extraordinarily true. His bow-stroke was elastic: and his sentiment, though occasionally fitful and grotesque, yet was always sympathetic. He has been borrowed from, but never equalled. In spite of an apparently exaggerated mode of delivery, his tone was even, and at moments exceedingly soft. When attaining the highest

point of fervour in bravura passages, the quality was always good, and the effect often thrilling. Indeed the tone of this great performer, though perhaps not full, was effective, and penetrated to a distance; subsequently finding a parallel in this respect in the case of that extraordinary vocalist, Jenny Lind. Moreover, there was great variety in the quality to meet the particular effect intended. It must be confessed that N. Paganini did little by his performances to elevate the art: he merely extended its boundaries in one particular direction, being more intent upon carrying the applause of the multitude than upon producing good music.

His most enduring composition is a set of studies published during his lifetime, and almost the only genuine work then issued under his name. During the last few years his MSS. were purchased by a well-known publisher, and given to the world. It seems doubtful, however, if, in his public performances, he confined himself to what he had written, being observed ofttimes to diversify and vary his passages and

embellishments. Some of the works so published are well worthy of careful study: their difficulty is unquestionably great.

Louis Spohr, born in 1784 at Brunswick, was one of the most gifted musicians of his time. He very early commenced the study of the violin, but did not attain proficiency on the instrument so rapidly as his extraordinary contemporary Paganini. He studied in early youth under Herr Eck, a clever but mannered violin-His style soon rose above that of his master, and his great model was Rode, for whose performance he entertained unbounded admiration. In 1820 he performed at a concert of the Philharmonic Society of London; and subsequently appeared (1839) at a Norwich festival. We do not propose to describe his career, inasmuch as all details are given in his autobiography and journals published since his death, which event took place in 1850.

In his style of playing, Spohr was exactly the opposite of Paganini. He disdained all meretricious ornament. His method was eminently classical, and his sentiment of the purest kind. In his adagios he was majestic: and in his allegros quiet and imperturbable. His compositions display a command of all the resources of the instrument, and an entire absence of If he failed in obtaining the applause of the multitude, he at any rate succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of the artistic world. The highest professors always listened to him with the most profound respect. Spohr, before hearing Paganini, received a visit from the great Italian violinist as they happened to be sojourning in the same town. Spohr begged to be favoured with a specimen of his brother artist's talent. Paganini excused himself by saying that he was suffering from a slight injury to a finger of his left hand: 'Were I to exhibit before yourself individually,' he said, 'I should affect a different style from that which I adopt before the general public, and I do not now feel in the humour. In my public performances I have a style of my own which never fails of complete success. We shall meet at a certain town some months hence, and then your curiosity shall be gratified.' This opportunity did occur: and Spohr, like everybody else, marvelled at the wondrous effects produced; but his conceptions were not quite satisfied: amidst much geniality he discerned an oddity and grotesqueness which did not please his fastidious tastes. This little incident will serve to convey an accurate notion of the contrast between the two. It is said by M. Fetis that Paganini heard Spohr at Venice with great pleasure. author of the present essay had the privilege of hearing the great German violinist once in London, in a quintett of his own composition. He was then in advanced age. The utmost precision, delicacy, polish, and refinement characterized his playing.

Spohr, as is well known, was an accomplished composer. His numerous works in every department of the art will endure. He was something more than a violinist. As to his compositions for his favourite instrument, they are elaborate and striking; and, of course, difficult of execution. His dramatic concerto is a most

original conception. He composed upwards of thirty violin quartetts, which are highly esteemed: also a violin school (or method). His oratorios, operas, symphonies, and works generally, do not come under our notice here. His greatness was manifest in whatever he touched.

This is a fitting place to mention one who has closely followed the school of Spohr.

B. Molique, born at Nuremberg in 1803, is an accomplished violinist and composer. Spohr relates that he gave Molique lessons when about fourteen years of age, and thought very highly of his talent at the time.

Molique came to London about 1842; and remained till the year 1866, when he retired to Germany. He was, in his best time, a skilful, neat executant, with a pure, unaffected style. In fact, he presented, if one may be permitted to say it, a tame portraiture of Spohr. He is, however, a learned musician, and has produced compositions of all kinds.\*

Charles de Beriot was born at Louvain in

<sup>\*</sup> Lately deceased, 1869.

1802. When nineteen years old, he proceeded to Paris; and shortly afterwards placed himself under Baillot at the Conservatoire. brilliant career in that city, he presented himself in London (1826), performing at the Philharmonic Society, at other concerts, and the provincial festivals. His success was unequivocal. He afterwards married Malibran, the eminent vocalist. During the year 1836, he reappeared in London with his wife, and was considered one of the most agreeable and effective performers ever heard in the metropolis. somewhat sudden decease of his wife, he retired hastily to the continent, where he has remained ever since, residing chiefly at Brussels. He is now totally blind; but still plays solos, quartetts, &c., from memory. His style is remarkable for genial sentiment, perfect intonation, smooth tone, and facile execution. His compositions for the instrument, though of course less profound than those of Spohr, are very attractive for ordinary listeners. His first concerto (dedicated to Leopold, King of the Belgians) produced a very good impression, embodying, as it did, in an effective manner the principal features of the modern style.

Ferdinand David, born in 1810 at Hamburg, has become of late years professor of the violin at the Conservatoire, Leipsic. He is said to have been a pupil of Spohr. About the year 1837 he visited London and was well received. He was the brother of that brilliant pianist, Madame Dulcken. David's violin style, judging from his published works, stands midway between Spohr and De Beriot; that is, its manner only, for no other comparison or resemblance can be drawn. Some of his smaller pieces for the pianoforte and violin are remarkably elegant and ingenious; he is thought to shine during his later years in the performance of chamber music.

We shall now say something of a violinist whose name has been previously mentioned, and who attained much popularity in England during the early part of the present century.

Nicholas Mori, born in 1796, commenced

very early the study of the violin. At eight years of age, announced as a prodigy, he performed a concerto by Viotti: subsequently he was placed under the tuition of that celebrated master for the space of six years. At the age of twenty, he was placed in the opera band, in which he worked his way up till, on the death of Spagnoletti, he became principal violin of that orchestra. He was then in the zenith of his fame. During the early portion of his career as a soloist, he scarcely ranged beyond the sober method of the school in which he had been educated. It is said that the success of Kiesewetter in performing the brilliant compositions of Mayseder, gave a new turn to the aspirations of Mori, who then completely changed his style; and it is well known that henceforth Mori prided himself upon his delivery of the showy works of the Viennese violinist. Indeed, for several seasons he repeatedly played a new and favourite piece by Mayseder, the variations on an original air dedicated to Paganini. was a most indefatigable student at his instrument, and very ambitious of distinction; hence he fretted considerably at the favour accorded to new artists who arrived in succession from the continent. Many of these undoubtedly displayed far higher claims to public favour than himself; such as Spohr and De Beriot. The impression produced by the elegant and attractive style of the latter, seriously interfered with his equanimity. But it was reserved for Paganini to produce a total eclipse of everything like ordinary violin playing. Though Mori, by dint of indomitable energy, had gained considerable popularity and success, and acquired much money, the continual excitement to which he had been subjected began to tell upon him. During the last two years of his life he had threatenings of paralysis, and for one season scarcely appeared as a soloist (about 1837), though continuing his ordinary duties at the opera. In 1830 he died rather suddenly.

Mori in his best time possessed rigid nerve, no inconsiderable advantage for a solo-player. His bowing was firm; his mechanical facility great, and his tone brilliant and full; and this is nearly all that can be said of his play; for, as to sympathy and expression, he had none. He could not be said to shine in quartett playing, for he uniformly shunned the performance of such compositions as afforded himself no special scope for display. He was no composer either; what little he did attempt in that way was below mediocrity.

The influence of Paganini upon violinists has been already adverted to. And, indeed, a host of servile imitators rapidly appeared. Among the foremost of these was Ole (or Olaus) Bull, a Norwegian, born at Bergen in 1810. Little is known of his early training on the instrument. But, having heard the performance of Paganini, he determined to attempt to emulate the great Italian in the more remote difficulties of the violin. He appeared in London in 1836, and with considerable success. This was a time when the public was disposed to welcome almost anything which could recall the memory of what had so recently taken it by surprise, especially

when the new arrival was ushered in by a flourish of trumpets. Ole Bull was not, in the strict sense of the term, an artiste. He had acquired a certain amount of dexterity with the bow and fingers. Indeed, what is termed the 'Belgian Staccato' appeared to be his great forte: he did it to perfection. He had evidently mastered the true balance of the bow, in the management of which, probably, he was much assisted by natural conformation. Violent contrasts of tone from soft to loud were among his points; and he affected also great knowledge of the finger-board. He re-appeared in London about 1860, and it was then observed that, while he had lost some of his most striking characteristics, he retained considerable finish and certainty. We have spoken of him as no artiste. His few compositions are eccentric and display no merit; and he never shone in the interpretation of music by the great masters.

Antonio Bazzini, born in 1816, was another example of this class of performers, hardly superior to Ole Bull in the power to attract,

and quite as faulty in his knowledge of what is good and classical. During his visit to London (about 1855), he played in a quartett by Beethoven, and in one by Spohr. The great German violinist was present; and, while concealing by dignified silence his dissatisfaction at the rendering of his own music, was vehement in his denunciation of the injustice done to Beethoven.

Wieniawski, a Pole or Russian by birth, and who is said to have been educated in Paris, seems to have mastered in an extraordinary degree the substantial points of the Paganini school. And, in addition, he combines nearly all the requisites for a really great artiste—brilliancy, expression, and an acquaintance with the works of the best classical masters.

Camillo Sivori, born in Genoa in 1828, is said to have received instructions from Paganini, and certainly he reflects the style of his great townsman more than any violinist hitherto. Sivori visited London in 1842-3, and having appeared as a solo player first on the stage of H. M. theatre, after the manner of his

great prototype, under a limited engagement, subsequently enlarged his sphere of action by giving concerts for himself at the Hanover Square rooms, and performing for the Philharmonic Society. It would be superfluous here to speak of the admirable qualities of this artiste. His perfect intonation, sparkling delivery, silvery even tone, and attractive style, won the sympathies of everybody. He was no mean performer, either, in classical music. In point of conception, too, he possessed the true Italian element. Were it not for his marked following of his master's footsteps, he almost bears the stamp of originality, being so very different to any other violinist of his day.

Henri Vieuxtemps, a Belgian, born in 1819, is a pupil of De Beriot. His success even in youth was unequivocal; and his reputation has never diminished. His talent takes a wide range. His style is commanding and broad, his tone powerful, and his mechanical development without limit. We may also add that he is perfectly at home in the music of Haydn, Mozart,

Beethoven, Mendelssohn, &c. Apropos of Sivori and Vieuxtemps, it has been said that, while the former was perfection in Mendelssohn's concerto, the latter was unapproachable in the first violin part of the same composer's ottett for stringed instruments.

It now becomes our task to speak of certain violinists generally or entirely resident in England.

Henry Blagrove, born in 1811, displayed remarkable promise in early youth; so much so that his elder contemporaries watched his progress with jealous interest. He was placed in the Royal Academy of Music on its first establishment: and soon afterwards received the appointment of solo violinist in the private band of King William IV. and Queen Adelaide. Subsequently, he pursued his studies under Spohr at Hesse Cassel, and then played with marked success at Vienna and elsewhere on the continent, measuring his skill with all the noted violinists of the time. During the year 1836, Mr Blagrove undertook the leadership of a

quartett party in conjunction with Messrs Gattie, Dando, and Lucas, a combination which at that time served to lead the public taste in a new and healthy direction. The ensemble was perfect. Mr Mori, determining not to be outdone, also attempted the like with Messrs Watts, Moralt, and Lindley: but, in spite of the greatness of names, it is very doubtful if the same perfection was attained. Mr Blagrove possesses in an eminent degree all the qualities of a great violin-His tone is powerful, and remarkably even, susceptible also of great delicacy; his intonation absolutely true, while, in the management of the bow, he has never been surpassed. Some violinists may have excelled him in depth of sentiment; yet he has been approached by few in those nicer shades which bespeak the real true artiste. In a word, he combines all the best features of the French, Belgian, and Italian schools, without any of their respective mannerisms. We shall scarcely find his equal in the performance of music by the great composers. works of Spohr he is without a rival in these days.

- P. Sainton, born in 1813, studied at the Conservatoire, Paris. In 1844 he appeared in London, where he has chiefly resided ever since. He received the appointment of soloist to Queen Victoria, which he held for a time. He is an exceedingly energetic and effective performer, and succeeds well in music of all styles. His compositions for the violin are ingenious and attractive.
- J. Joachim, born in 1831, studied at Vienna under Böhm. When about fifteen years of age, he appeared in London under the guardianship of Mendelssohn. It must be admitted that the youth displayed talent of an uncommon order: he not only performed solos of the highest difficulty with great precision, but took his place in the classical quartett with the apparent finesse of a veteran in the art. Nor has his subsequent career exhibited any falling off. His artistic knowledge is almost without parallel. No one who has heard him perform the violin fugues of Sebastian Bach from memory, is likely to forget the talent thus evoked.

Henry Cooper, though rarely heard in London of late years, is a violinist of unusual talent. His studies in early youth were pursued under Spagnoletti, a most judicious master. He is not only a bold and unerring solo player, but intimately acquainted with the quartetts of the classical composers. He is one of the few violinists of the present day who can satisfactorily execute the studies of Paganini, his sure finger enabling him to surmount difficulties which are beyond the reach of most violinists.

Ludwig Straus, a pupil of Böhm at Vienna, is a judicious and careful violinist, displaying the best qualities of the German and Belgian schools. He has been heard to advantage in the concertos of Molique and Spohr, no mean ordeal for an artiste; whilst his quartett playing is of a superior order.

A host of names are necessarily omitted, many of which are well and favourably known in England, such as Jansa, Dando, Oury, Lauterbach, Deichman, Laub, Auer, Carrodus, Wilhelmji, and Webb (the clever viola player now deceased). But one name must not be passed over in silence; for, though removed by death from the list, it leaves behind reminiscences of real genius.

H. W. Ernst, a Moravian, born in 1814, was remarkable for his originality of style. Indeed, when he visited London about 1843, his fame had preceded him, and great interest was excited. His solo playing, however, was deficient in power and certainty; yet was pervaded by such elegiac tenderness as uniformly to engage the sympathies of his auditory. His reading of quartetts was characterized by the fullest intelligence, especially manifest in the posthumous ones by Beethoven. His works are romantic in cast, and for the most part abounding in difficulties.

We have now concluded an imperfect survey of a branch of musical art, which, though apparently lying in a small compass, yet exercises wide influence among all intelligent connoisseurs.

## THE VIOLIN

## AND ITS HISTORY.\*

FIDDLE history, as a thesis, can hardly at first sight be deemed attractive to the reading public in this utilitarian age, when men's minds are so engrossed by scientific discovery, social topics, and political schemes. But it must be confessed that, of late years, the field of literature has been greatly extended; and the study of the fine arts, with their accessories, occupies no small share of attention. The cultivation of music in particular is, of late, greatly on the increase amongst all classes of the community.

<sup>\*</sup> The History of the Violin, &-c. By William Sandys, F.S.A., and Simon Andrew Forster. London: J. R. Smith, 1864.

Formerly the lyric drama was the chief, nay, almost the only thing of the kind thought worth listening to, especially by the wealthy; whereas, now-a-days, instrumental music of the highest order finds willing, attentive, and discriminating listeners. For this state of things we are, unquestionably, indebted, in the first instance, to the promenade concerts commenced by the late M. Jullien. In the mean time, the practice of concerted instrumental 'chamber' music had already engaged the attention of amateurs and professors. The present success of the 'Monday Popular Concerts' at St James's Hall affords a striking proof of what may be effected in this department of musical combination. In these entertainments the violin is the leading instrument. To this circumstance, by itself, the great virtuosi of the day mainly look for the foundation and extension of their reputation as executants in this country. It was always the fashion to speak of the violin as the prince of musical instruments. But, unquestionably, the extraordinary performances of Paganini gave the first

real prominence to the instrument, and effected a revolution as to the presumed extent of its resources. It cannot be denied that the innovations introduced by this unrivalled artiste exercised a marked, and by no means an unsalutary, influence upon his successors in the art of fiddling. The performances of the leading modern violinists are invested with a charm apparently attributable to the exquisite refinement by which they are characterized. Who could listen without being moved by the absolute finish and perfect tone of a Blagrove? the neatness and purity of a Sivori? the sensibility of an Ernst? the fire, dash, and precision of a Vieuxtemps? or the enthusiastic devotion of a Joachim? But the success of a performer must be partly due to the excellence of the instrument itself. A 'Cremona fiddle' becomes, per force, an object of curiosity.

Still, it must be admitted, the violin had its advocates in a past generation. Each connoisseur or performer had his favourite instrument, to which he attached a cherished importance,

and the dealers were ever ready to take advantage of the demand for the instruments then in vogue. The older and more esteemed instruments acquired an adventitious value. By-andby it became understood that the violins of Italian manufacture were greatly to be preferred to all others. In the mean time, histories of music and musical instruments came into demand. The works of Burney, Hawkins, Parke, and others were read. And though they contained much interesting and valuable information about musicians and artists, little authentic knowledge was to be gleaned respecting violin manufacture. Dubourg's book on the violin professed to do much on this head. Otto, too, has contributed a monograph on the violin, but his ideas on the merits of different violin-makers require correction and modification. Fetis, in writing on the same subject, is hardly up to the mark. But the main point, the identification of the great Italian workmen, still remained a knotty one. It is in this state of things that the announcement of the work under notice merits

our especial attention, coming, as it does, from the pen of two persons, one an amateur of wellknown literary ability, and the other a reputable dealer, himself a manufacturer. The work, while professing to be a history of the violin 'from the remotest times to the present,' undertakes to afford also some account of the principal makers, English and foreign. The introductory chapter opens with a concise, and not very explicit, description of the modern violin, telling us pretty much what we know already that it has a back, front, sides, bridge, strings, &c., and that the quality of tone produced by the friction of the bow on the strings depends very much on the talent and capability of the performer. Then follow a few anecdotes illustrating the supposed effects of music upon reptiles and animals. An instance is cited from Fetis of a lizard which always appeared from its hiding-place during the performance of the slow movement to Mozart's Quartett in C! We can also relate a circumstance which occurred many years ago at the house of a well-

known aged amateur residing not very far from Marylebone Church, who used to hold periodical morning quartett parties. Mozart's quintett in G Minor was being performed on one occasion: everything had proceeded serenely till the second slow movement preceding the finale was entered upon, about which time a certain old overfed house-dog set up a most interrupting howl. The aged host, who was playing the leading violin, being a person of irritable peevish temper, exclaimed, 'Dear me, often has that dog listened patiently to that adagio, but he never behaved so before!' Our authors, however, abruptly turning to the early history of stringed instruments, begin (after reference to Jubal) by assuming that 'the words translated harp and organ in the Old Testament may probably be considered to represent the stringed and wind instruments. But for a complete consideration of this obscure subject, which embraces the question as to how far the use of the bow arose from the intercourse of the Eastern, Northern, and Western nations,

we must refer our readers to the book itself. At any rate we are introduced to an unpronounceable Welsh word, 'Crwth,' which we are told implies a fiddle of early date, and may be turned into 'Crowd.' We are then carried along through the Middle Ages. And it would appear that, in conjunction with the performance of the early English plays, viols of various sizes and pitch were used. Probably this portion of the work, in a literary point of view, is the best executed.

We are now gradually led to a consideration of the violin proper, by incidental notices of the leading performers of the day. Amongst the most prominent of these is mentioned 'Thomas Baltzar, born at Lubeck about 1630. He came over to England in 1655.'... One Davis Mell and others had already attained to a considerable reputation; but they appeared to be eclipsed by Baltzar, who in due time became leader of King Charles's band, but died in 1663. He seems to have been succeeded by John Bannister, who died in 1679; but whose son

John was a fine performer on the violin and one of King William's band, and the first violin at Drury Lane on the introduction of operas there. And here we are regularly launched into the modern violin history. As the authors proceed in their task, much prominence is given to notices of contemporaneous performers; and not always, to our thinking, very satisfactorily. Unquestionably exception may be taken to the estimate thus put forth of certain performers, especially as they come down in point of date towards our own day. We notice, too, here and there a mistake, perhaps produced by carelessness in the diction. In speaking of the violoncello players, Bernard Romberg is mentioned with but faint praise; and then follows a notice of 'his brother Andrew, a good performer.' Query: Not on the violoncello, but, as we understand it, on the violin. To our thinking, biographical and critical notices of artistes, to be satisfactory, should be treated separately and fully. A space not exceeding two pages is devoted to the history of bow

makers. This is not enough, considering their respective merits. We are said to have 'English makers of the bow, as Dodd, Panormo, and Tubbs, with others who are surpassed by none.' Surely such a statement is far too sweeping. Few competent judges would place these names so high as Tourte, of Paris, respecting whose manufacture (and that of his son) we should like to have been furnished with more minute particulars.

To revert, however, to the violin, we are informed that 'in the present century the instruments of the violin class have been perfectly established, the viol class being now obsolete, except as matters of curiosity.' This is true enough. The earliest makers of any repute appear to be the Amati family, who worked at Cremona, and certain others at Brescia, from the middle of the sixteenth century or before. Altogether the Brescia instruments constitute a distinct class by themselves. The more ancient maker there was Gaspar di Salo; the information given of him in the work before us is very

meagre. We have an impression that, besides being characterized by 'the SS holes being large and well cut and parallel,' the purfling was double in some cases. The other maker of this class (said to be a pupil of G. di Salo) is Giovanni Paolo Maggini. His instruments were certainly characterized by double purfling. De Beriot played upon a very fine specimen of this maker. The tone of the Brescia instruments is for the most part round and full, but rather muffled, more nearly approaching to the tone of the viola (tenor violin). We would here remark upon a typographical defect which pervades this portion of the book; each maker of importance should commence a paragraph, and the name be given in capitals, as more likely to catch the eye, instead of in ordinary type, often in the middle of a line. Moreover, what is termed a running head line at the top of each page would have been an advantage, as giving a clue to the subject matter on opening at any particular place. But to return to the violinmakers flourishing from the middle of the

sixteenth century. The greatest name at that period is Amati. There were several makers among the family. The earliest was Andreas Amati, born at Cremona about 1520. The identification of the various members of this family is involved in some difficulty; and it is due to the writers to say that they have thrown much light on this obscure subject. The most celebrated maker of this family was Nicholas, son of Hieronymus, born in 1596, died in 1684. His instruments of the larger or grand pattern are much esteemed to this day. Nicholas Amati had a renowned pupil, Antonio Stradiuari, probably, Joseph Guarneri excepted, the most celebrated of all makers. A. Stradiuari was born at Cremona about 1644, and died at a very advanced age. The connoisseur will find in the book under review many interesting details given respecting Stradiuari and his workmanship, his earlier instruments being quite 'Amatisès;' afterwards of the 'long pattern' (these to our thinking being his least attractive specimens). We are told his best in-

struments were made from about 1700 to 1725, and this we fully believe to be correct. These are what are known emphatically as 'Grand Strads.' We are furnished with accounts of some of his best instruments—violins, tenors, and violoncellos. We ourselves recollect an extraordinarily fine violin by this maker, styled the 'Jupiter' Strad, formerly the property of General Kyd. The tenor included in Lord Macdonald's quartett of Strads was a beautiful specimen, subsequently sold by auction among the effects of the late Mr Goding, and purchased by M. Vuillaume, the Paris dealer, for about £250. Query: Is this the one mentioned as being in Sir William Curtis's sale previously? So much for Stradiuari.

We now arrive at the greatest name of all in the history of violin manufacture, Guarneri. The first of this family in point of time is Pietro Andreas; or, as he is generally called, 'Andreas.' His instruments are, comparatively speaking, but moderately good; perhaps on a par with the second-rate Amatis, with

which they are sometimes confounded. He made, however, some good violoncellos. Two sons of his worked, Joseph and Peter, the former the better of the two. The greatest artiste of them all was Joseph, nephew of Andreas. It is hardly too much to say that he is emphatically the king of the Cremona makers. Nevertheless, we should have been glad of a more minute account of him and his instruments than is here given. Unfortunately, the specimens now known as having emanated from this maker are very unequal in quality. a person of dissipated habits, and sometimes in prison, the means at his disposal were but precarious. This circumstance may account for the rough unfinished work which sometimes displays itself. In spite of all this, there is an individuality in his manner. The tone of all is quite peculiar. He was, however, hardly appreciated like Stradiuari till comparatively a late period. Paganini won his laurels upon a Joseph Guarneri; and, from henceforth, these instruments were much sought after. The late Mr

Mori, who died in 1839, played upon one. remarkably fine specimen is mentioned as being now in the possession of a Dorsetshire amateur. It is thought that no violoncellos of this maker are in existence, though his uncle Andreas made many. We would here notice an apparent inconsistency in speaking of the tone of these fine instruments in the work under review. At page 204 we read—'It may in general be considered as a distinction that the instruments of the Amati family have a pure and sweet tone, but not much power; those of Stradiuari, a rich and powerful tone; those of Guarneri, still more volume of tone.' Then, at page 225, speaking of Stradiuari—'The four strings are generally of equal beauty of tone which cannot be surpassed.' Lastly, at page 233, speaking of Joseph Guarneri-'The tone of his instruments is brilliant, and some of them are scarcely inferior to those of Stradiuari.' . . . The writer of those pages is clearly in doubt which to prefer, Stradiuari or Guarneri. The truth is, opinions are divided on the subject. The best instruments of each

maker yield a very powerful tone, those of Stradiuari particularly so. But the quality of a Joseph Guarneri is quite unique, and recognizable in addition to its power. Again, a favourite expression pervades the book in reference to the finest instruments of the Cremona school, a 'reedy tone.' We much question if a good violinist would think himself flattered by being told he produced a tone of that character from his instrument? We must, however, make allowance for the very peculiar images raised in the mind by an appeal to the senses. Sometimes we hear of a 'silvery' tone, or a 'golden' tone. Doubtless, much depends upon the capability of the performer. Some performers, no matter what they play upon, always produce a scratchy, thin tone, others a brilliant sound; others, again, a soft quality. So much diversity arises out of the individual feeling of the player. In fact, no instrument is so flexible in its tone as the violin.

But we are not to suppose that the whole manufacture of violins and kindred instruments is centred in the one great Cremona school.

We are introduced to a host of other Italian names of less note, it must be confessed, who flourished contemporaneously and subsequently. We only complain that undue prominence is given to some of inferior importance, while others of real interest are passed over cursorily. Guadagnini was an admirable pupil Stradiuari, so also were the Bergonzis. About this time (the eighteenth century) there were several good makers of the Parisian school-Chappuy, Lupot, and others. Somewhat earlier in date are certain makers of the German school, especially the Klotz family, who worked under Jacob Steiner, of the Tyrol, himself thought highly of at one time, though now discarded. The English school of violin-makers occupies a considerable space. Without doubt there are a good many excellent names among them, ranging from an early period. The most remarkable of these are Rayman, Urquhart, Pamphillon, Parker, and Barak Norman. Towards the close of the eighteenth century we find Richard Duke, whose instruments are still much esteem-

ed. We have complained of a typographical defect in bringing out the names of certain great makers in the earlier part of the work; but, strange to say, an elaborate list in alphabetical order is given of a vast number of English makers with chronological particulars, most of these being quite nonentities. Not that we would disparage our own countrymen. addition to the above-mentioned, we can adduce Banks, of Salisbury, who made excellent instruments, which fetch a good price at the present day. It requires much delicacy in an author while treating of the labours of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. One of the writers of the present work is a maker, and we think there are some now living to whom he hardly does justice. The present W. E. Hill, of London, is spoken of but slightingly; but he is considered a first-rate workman by those who are best able to judge of his merits. Withers, too, of Coventry-street, London, does not receive much justice here. To say nothing of his well-known honour and integrity, he is a careful and competent workman, and has made

some excellent copies of Cremona instruments, one of which is in our possession. Our author, however, alluded to above, does himself, or rather his family, ample justice. The name of Forster, it must be confessed, stands high in the manufacture of stringed instruments. the grandfather of the present representative of the family whose instruments were and are so much appreciated. His violoncellos, though not bearing comparison with the highest Italian specimens, are nevertheless first-rate. One can always be sure of a good tone upon them. The late celebrated professor, Robert Lindley, always used them in preference, it is said, to any others. This circumstance alone would speak much in their favour. His son (Forster the second) made good violoncellos, but not so good as his father. Forster the third, the grandson, and one of the authors of the work before us, is a fair workman, and no doubt an accurate judge of instruments, as his lengthy criticisms show. But it is difficult to conceive why the pedigree and antecedents of the Forster family should be obtruded to such an extent as appears in the book, this, too, quite independently of the subject of musical instruments; while we are favoured also with a complete list of every violin, tenor, violoncello, and double-bass manufactured by Forster the first, and where it went to.

It remains for us to notice one very interesting feature of the book, namely, the appearance for the first time of letters written by the great composer Haydn to Forster the second, concerning the publication of certain compositions, symphonies, sonatas, &c. These letters will be read with pleasure by all who feel an interest in anything that pertains to the cultivation of music in its highest form. Altogether the book is one which deserves to be purchased and read extensively. The purely historical matter (by Mr Sandys, we presume) is well given, and contains much interesting material for the antiquary; while the more technical points, devolving upon Mr Forster, though we dissent from some of his opinions, are developed with great minuteness and accuracy.

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